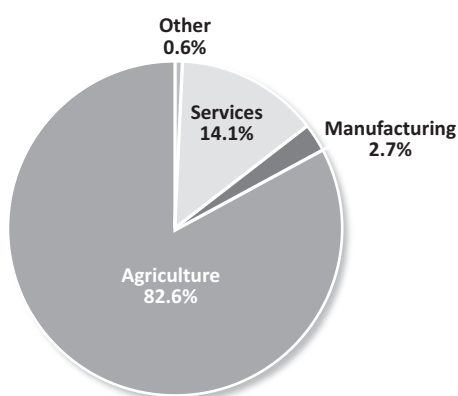


In 2012, Mali made a minimal advancement in efforts to eliminate the worst forms of child labor. During the reporting period, the Government adopted a comprehensive law to prohibit trafficking in persons and made minimal efforts to address the issue of child soldiers. However, laws relating to the worst forms of child labor are not harmonized and gaps in enforcement, exacerbated by the military coup, subsequent suspension of foreign aid, and terrorist occupation in the north, has left children unprotected. In addition, children continue to be recruited and used for military purposes by non-state groups as well as by pro-government militias that have trained on government land and received training from independently acting members of the Malian army. Children continue to engage in the worst forms of child labor, including as child soldiers in militias and in dangerous activities in agriculture.

Statistics on Working Children and Education

Children	Age	Percent
Working	5-14 yrs.	46.4 (1,700,782)
Attending School	5-14 yrs.	42.0
Combining Work and School	7-14 yrs.	20.5
Primary Completion Rate		55.4

Working Children by Sector, Ages 5-14



Sources:

Primary completion rate: Data from 2011, published by UNESCO Institute for Statistics, 2013.(1)

All other data: Understanding Children's Work Project's analysis of statistics from SIMPOC Survey, 2005.(2)



Prevalence and Sectoral Distribution of the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Children in Mali are engaged in the worst forms of child labor, including child soldiers in militias and dangerous activities in agriculture.(3-10) Children, as young as age 5, work in agriculture, including in livestock raising, animal traction, and in the production of rice and cotton.(4, 11-18) Children working in agriculture seed, plow, and harvest fields. They also transport the harvest to storage. Children use dangerous tools, carry heavy loads, apply harmful pesticides, and plow fields with oxen.(19-21) Children raising livestock in Mali raise cattle and reportedly raise oxen and small ruminants. Children handling livestock suffer injuries such as being bitten, butted, gored, or trampled by animals.(17, 18, 22) Reportedly, children are also employed in dangerous labor in the fishing sector; they are at risk of drowning while capturing fish and of injury from sharp tools while processing fish.(23)

Children in Mali work as domestic servants, which may require them to work long hours and perform strenuous tasks without sufficient food or shelter. These children may be isolated in private homes and are susceptible to physical and sexual abuse.(4, 24-26)

Children, especially girls who work in the vending and mining sectors, are engaged in commercial sexual exploitation.(10-12, 27)

Children in Mali are engaged in small-scale gold mines.(10, 16, 27-29) Children, as young as age 5 work long hours in all mining activities, including extracting material from underground passages.(27-29) They also amalgamate gold

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with mercury. These children are subjected to unhealthy and dangerous conditions, risking injury and exposure to mercury poisoning and other illnesses. In mining, children perform work that surpasses their physical and mental capabilities.(27-29)

Forced child labor in Mali is found in agriculture and domestic service. Limited evidence suggests that forced child labor occurs in mining and the informal economy.(3) Children, especially of the Tamachek community, are subject to hereditary slavery in northern Mali. These children may be forced to work as domestic or agricultural laborers.(3, 10, 30, 31) In addition, children, particularly of the Songhai ethnicity, work in debt bondage in the northern salt mines of Taudenni.(3, 23, 32)

Thousands of boys, placed in the care of Koranic teachers for the purpose of education, are forced by their teachers to beg on the street or to work in fields; they must then surrender the money they have earned to the teachers.(4, 10, 33-36) These children may be punished physically if they do not remit enough money to their teachers. Other Koranic teachers force the boys to work their land for free.(33, 36-39)

Mali is a source, transit, and destination country for children trafficked for forced labor and commercial sexual exploitation.(32, 36, 40) Children are trafficked internally for domestic service, gold mining, begging, and agricultural work, including in the production of rice.(36) Malian children are trafficked to Senegal and Guinea for forced labor in gold mines, and to Côte d'Ivoire to work as domestic servants and as laborers on plantations, especially on cotton and cocoa farms.(32, 33, 36, 41) Malian boys are trafficked to Mauritania and Senegal for forced begging, while Malian girls are trafficked there for domestic service and commercial sexual exploitation. Boys from other countries, such as Niger, Guinea, and Burkina Faso are trafficked to Mali for forced begging and they work in mines and rice fields.(29, 36, 42, 43) Girls from Nigeria are trafficked to Mali for commercial sexual exploitation.(40, 44, 45)

In January 2012, attacks against the Malian army were carried out by the National Movement for the Liberation of Azawad (MNLA); Al-Qaeda in the Islamic Maghreb (AQIM); Ansar Dine; and the Movement for Unity and Jihad in West Africa (MUJAO). Following the attacks, the three main regions of northern Mali fell under the control of these groups.(46) In April 2012, the rebels declared northern Mali an independent state. In March 2012, members of the Malian army overthrew the president of Mali in a coup d'état. Facing international condemnation, an interim government was agreed to and

was sworn in April 2012.(47) In January 2013, French troops began to carry out airstrikes against Islamist fighters in the north.(47) Although French and Malian forces were able to take back key areas in northern Mali, other areas in the north remain under rebel control.(48, 49)

In 2012, armed rebel and extremist Islamic militia groups, including the MNLA, the Arab Movement of Azawad, Ansar Dine, the MUJAO, and AQIM began recruiting and using child soldiers in northern Mali.(6-9, 46, 50-60) In 2012, more than 1,000 Malian children, including Malian children in neighboring refugee camps, were forcibly recruited, forcibly sold, or willingly paid by extremist groups to fight.(6, 9, 10, 46, 50, 54, 57, 58, 61, 62) Reports indicate that some families are forced to sell, or willingly receive as much as \$2,000 per child, while other children receive up to \$30 per day to fight.(9, 46, 50, 54, 57, 61, 63) Limited evidence indicates that some children, held in traditional slavery, are sold by their masters to Islamic extremists to fight. Limited evidence also indicates that Koranic masters have traded hundreds of their students to extremist groups to serve as soldiers.(56, 62) Children, some as young as age 8, carry assault rifles, man checkpoints, gather intelligence, guard prisoners, conduct foot patrols, and participate in looting and extortion.(6-10, 58, 62) Limited evidence indicates that children are used as mine sweeps, servants, and human shields. Girls are used by armed groups for sexual exploitation.(7, 56, 62) Limited evidence indicates that a disproportional number of child recruits are of Arab, Songhai, Peul, and Tuareg ethnicities.(62, 64)

Children are also recruited by, and trained to fight in, pro-government counterinsurgent militias, including the Liberation Front of the North, Ganda Koy, and Ganda Izo.(9, 10, 46, 56, 58, 60, 62) These pro-government militias train on government land. Soldiers within the army, acting independently, provided training to pro-government counterinsurgent militias.(9, 10, 46, 60, 65-68) Some pro-government militias are being integrated into the Malian army. The UN Special Representative for Children in Armed Conflict notes that a screening and separation process for children as part of the integration of pro-government militias into the Malian army is needed.(62)

In 2012, following the coup d'état and violent extremist attacks, grave and large-scale human rights violations occurred in Mali, leading to the displacement of up to 301,027 internally displaced people. Many of those displaced are children, often separated from parents or unaccompanied by adults.(53, 59, 69-72) In northern Mali, access to education,

which can be a critical component in preventing child economic exploitation, has been significantly hindered by violence, displacement, and school closures.(25, 51, 53, 58, 62) As of February 2013, 86.0 percent of students in the north lacked access to education.(62) In many of the schools that remained open during the occupation of violent extremist groups in the north, extremist groups, including MUJAO and Ansar Dine, separated girls from boys in the classroom, or limited or prohibited school access to female students.(10, 53, 59, 73-75) Koranic schools are used for the recruitment of child soldiers and some schools are used as military storage and training bases.(46, 55, 57, 58, 64) Access to education is also hindered by a nationwide chronic shortage of teachers, school materials, school infrastructure, and transportation.(3, 10, 15, 38, 53, 76, 77) Additionally, limited evidence suggests that corporal punishment and the sexual exploitation of students by teachers prevents some children from remaining in school.(78) In some areas of Mali, due to societal discrimination, Arab, Peul, and black Tamasheq children were denied access to education.(10, 59) Mali experienced a severe drought in 2012 and households in northern Mali continue to experience food access constraints. Although there are no statistics yet, several reports indicate that the violence, drought, and growing food insecurity have led to a decrease in school attendance and an increase in the prevalence of the worst forms of child labor, particularly in gold mining and domestic service.(25, 59, 70, 71, 79-81)

Thousands of Malian children work on the street, but specific hazards associated with these activities is unknown.(81-83)

Laws and Regulations on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

Against the backdrop of instability and violence, areas of the north remain under rebel control and are therefore ungovernable by the Malian government, leaving Malian citizens in the north unprotected by the laws laid out below.(48, 49)

The Labor Code sets the minimum age for work at 14, although children under age 14 may work with the approval of the Minister of Labor. A decree also permits children age 12 or older to perform domestic or seasonal light work, such as assisting in harvesting activities.(84, 85) However, the Labor Code only applies to contractual work and excludes children working in the informal sector, including noncontractual agricultural and domestic work.(86)

Children under age 18 are protected by restrictions on activities such as industrial night work and hazardous labor.(35, 37)

Mali's hazardous occupation list prohibits the employment of any child under age 18 in any work that presents dangers or harms the morality of the child.(87) However, a decree from 1996 that is still in force permits children ages 16 to 18 to perform certain hazardous activities. The 1996 Decree, while requiring labor inspectors to authorize this work, does not require employers to demonstrate that such children have received required vocational training to mitigate the hazardous nature of these activities as called for in ILO Convention 138.(85) This gap could expose these children to increased risks.

International Conventions and Selected Laws on Child Labor and Education

	C138, Minimum Age	✓
	C182, Worst Forms of Child Labor	✓
	CRC	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on Armed Conflict	✓
	CRC Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography	✓
	Palermo Protocol on Trafficking in Persons	✓
	Minimum Age for Work	14
	Minimum Age for Hazardous Work	18
	Compulsory Education Age	16
	Free Public Education	Yes

The Child Protection Code provides additional protection for children under age 18, while the Penal Code establishes criminal penalties for several of the worst forms of child labor.(88, 89) The Child Protection Code identifies begging as a form of economic exploitation of children, and the Penal Code provides for punishment for engaging a child in begging. However, the Penal Code does not provide penalties for some of the prohibitions enumerated in the Child Protection Code.(88, 89) For example, although the Child Protection Code prohibits children under age 18 from participating in armed conflicts or joining the armed forces, the Penal Code only provides penalties for those recruiting and enlisting children under age 15.(88, 89) Additionally, although the Child Protection Code prohibits the use of children in

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organized crime, no law prohibits the use of a child for illicit activities.(43, 89, 90)

The Penal Code prohibits the trafficking and debauching of children. However, the prohibition of the debauchment of children only applies to children under age 13.(88) The Penal Code also forbids third-party involvement in prostitution (pimping) and the sexual slavery of children. However, the law that prohibits these acts is only applicable to girls.(88) Furthermore, since provisions of the Penal Code only apply to cases of pimping, those soliciting or purchasing sex from a minor are not punishable under this law. The Child Protection Code explicitly broadens the definition of sexual exploitation, including prostitution, to both girls and boys. (88, 89) However, there are no penalties prescribed by this Code.(88)

Although the Penal Code bans slavery, no penalties are outlined for the offense.(88) Forced labor is prohibited under the Labor Code. However, the punishment for forced labor is only a fine and/or imprisonment for a period of 15 days to 6 months.(84)

The Constitution provides for free and compulsory education.(91) Education is compulsory for 9 years, beginning at age 7, and all children have the right to education.(3, 5, 15, 89) However, some Arab, Peul, and black Tamasheq, also known as Bellah, children are denied access to school at the local level because of their ethnicity; and although the Constitution establishes free education, parents are still expected to pay school fees for registration, uniforms, books, and materials.(3, 10, 16, 59, 91) These costs may deter families from sending their children to school.

On June 28, 2012, the Government of Mali passed a comprehensive trafficking in persons law.(92) The law prohibits and sets penalties for the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring, or receipt of persons for the purpose of exploitation.(93) The law considers exploitation to include slavery, forced labor, servitude, and commercial sexual exploitation. It also includes protections for all people or groups of people from forcing a person to beg.(93) Although the exploitation of children, including slavery and commercial exploitation is prohibited in the context of trafficking, it is unclear if these forms of exploitation are prohibited as standalone offenses.

Institutional Mechanisms for Coordination and Enforcement

The National Unit to Fight Against Child Labor coordinates Mali's efforts to eliminate child labor.(94-96) Its mission is to reduce the worst forms of child labor by collecting statistics, coordinating programs, and acting as a liaison with

partners.(95, 97) As of 2010, seven members staffed the Unit.(13) Although the National Unit to Fight Against Child Labor is named the official coordinating body for child labor policy, the multiplicity of government structures sharing some of this responsibility leads to an inefficient and cumbersome system. Currently, the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry for Women, Children and the Family, the Ministry of Internal Security, and the Ministry of Labor share responsibility.(98) The National Coordinating Committee for the Fight Against Trafficking in Persons and Associated Practices coordinates government efforts to combat trafficking. The committee has 43 members, comprising various government agencies, civil society groups, and NGOs.(3, 39) The National Unit, the National Coordinating Committee, the Committee to Track Child Labor and Trafficking, and the Fode and Yaguine Action Network hold regular meetings to focus on improving interagency coordination on child labor and human trafficking.(98)

In October 2012, the Government of Mali established an interministerial group to prevent grave violations against children. The working group aims to conduct awareness raising campaigns to prevent the recruitment and use of children in armed conflict.(62) The group will also conduct joint missions with international partners to determine the presence of children in self-defense militias.

Child labor laws are enforced by the Ministry of Youth, Labor, Employment, and Professional Training through its 54 labor inspectors. Labor inspectors receive and investigate complaints and perform unannounced labor inspections in the formal labor sector.(56, 98) In addition to inspections, inspectors provide dispute settlement and conciliation. These additional responsibilities detract from labor inspectors' abilities to complete workplace inspections.(99) These responsibilities make it difficult for the small number of labor inspectors to effectively enforce child labor laws.(84, 85, 98) None of the labor inspectors specialize in child labor. However, one person in each region is designated as the point of contact for the National Unit to Fight Against Child Labor.(56) Due to the military coup and subsequent suspension of foreign aid, funds for the labor inspectorate are at a strict minimum and funds are rarely allocated to regional labor inspectors.(56) Due to the terrorist occupation of the north, labor inspectors do not operate in the northern region.(56) The Government of Mali lacks a mechanism to monitor the informal sector for child labor, including most agricultural work and self-employed children.(84, 85, 98) The number of inspections carried out, violations cited, fines assessed, or fines collected during the reporting period is unknown.

The Ministries of Justice, Internal Security, Labor, and Women, Children, and the Family work together to enforce laws pertaining to all worst forms of child labor.(56) The Ministry of Internal Security, through its judiciary police, is the principal agency enforcing laws relating to children involved in illicit activities and, through its Morals Brigade of the National Police, is the principal agency enforcing laws relating to trafficking and the commercial sexual exploitation of children.(56) The Morals Brigade is staffed by approximately 10 officers. However, Morals Brigade officers are responsible for other duties in addition to their duties pertaining to trafficked or exploited children.(56) The Morals Brigade does not have national coverage.(100) Although the Brigade was created to handle criminal affairs involving children, the main police force has no explicit obligation to turn children's cases over to it. As a result, many children's issues are handled by members of the general police force, who do not receive special training on children's affairs.(100) During the reporting period, some police officers and magistrates received training on children's rights and four arrests were made on allegations of child trafficking and sexual exploitation.(56) In 2012, the Gendarmerie rescued 37 Burkinabe and 2 Nigerian children from the worst forms of child labor in artisanal gold mining. The children were returned to their countries of origin.(56) In addition, four Burkinabe traffickers were arrested for trafficking 11 Burkinabe children for labor in artisanal gold mines.(56) Research did not identify the number of criminal investigations, prosecutions, and convictions relating to the other worst forms of child labor. The Ministry of Women, Children, and the Family is specifically responsible for assisting with trafficking victims.(101) However, there are no government facilities in Mali to shelter or offer support to victims of trafficking.(43)

Reports indicate that, due to a lack of law and judicial enforcement, the prevalence of hereditary slavery has worsened since the conflict in Mali began.(102) Four civil lawsuits involving children held in traditional slavery are pending due to the absence of the justice administration in the north.(56)

In March 2013, during military operations, French soldiers apprehended five child soldiers. These children were transferred to Malian authorities and handed over to UNICEF for interim care.(62) Children are currently being transferred from French forces to UNICEF via Malian authorities.(62) Children also receive psychosocial care and reunification services from a government-owned facility, with the collaboration of UNICEF and NGOs.(59) However, the process for handing over children is not a formalized operation, and standard operating procedures are not in place.(62) Evidence does not reveal any

efforts made by the Government of Mali to prosecute offenders of or enforce laws relating to the use of child soldiers.

Government Policies on the Worst Forms of Child Labor

The National Plan to Combat Child Labor (2011-2020) has the goal of eradicating the worst forms of child labor by 2015, and all exploitative child labor by 2020.(23, 103) The Plan calls for improving the judicial framework, increasing awareness about child labor, withdrawing children from the worst forms of child labor, providing these children with appropriate remediation services, and improving the livelihoods of families.(23) This Plan falls under the direction of the National Unit to Fight Against Child Labor and is to be implemented in conjunction with 14 other Ministries, including the Ministries of Education, Agriculture, Mining, Justice, and Women, Children, and the Family.(23) However, there is no evidence that implementation of the National Action Plan has begun.

Child labor concerns have also been incorporated in the UN Development Assistance Framework (2008-2012).(23, 104) Research did not identify the status of implementing the framework.

In February 2013, an inter-ministerial circular was signed on the prevention, protection, and reintegration of children in armed conflict.(62) Information regarding the activities implemented under this circular is unavailable.

Social Programs to Eliminate or Prevent the Worst Forms of Child Labor

During the reporting period, Mali participated in social programs to reduce the prevalence of the worst forms of child labor. The Government of Mali partnered with WFP to provide school feeding programs to 290 schools in southern Mali, as well as emergency food distribution centers to over 250,000 people.(70) It also participated in two USDOL-funded regional projects to combat the worst forms of child labor, both of which assist ECOWAS to develop systems to help its member countries reduce the worst forms of child labor.(105) The ECOWAS I project is funded for 4 years at \$7.95 million. The ECOWAS II project is funded for 4 years at \$5 million.(105, 106)

Although Mali does provide some housing, medical, and psychosocial support, it has generally relied on NGOs and international organizations to provide social programs for vulnerable children.(32, 38, 101) Mali does not have a formal method for transferring vulnerable children who are detained by the police and Morals Brigade to NGOs, although there is

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an informal transfer system through which the police transfer children to NGOs; the transfer is recorded by both the NGO and the police.(32, 38, 101)

Prior to the coup in March 2012 and the attempted secession in northern Mali, the Government of Mali participated in two USAID-funded projects to improve access to education, including a 5-year, \$30 million project to improve literacy by providing interactive radio instruction for primary school students and a 5-year project to provide basic education and training to out-of-school youth.(107-109) Prior to the coup, Mali also participated in a 4-year, \$21 million project funded by the European Commission to combat child labor through education in 11 countries globally.(110, 111) The project worked with private companies to encourage social responsibility, conducted awareness-raising campaigns, and

worked with teachers, students, and community members to sensitize communities about the worst forms of child labor.(112) Following the coup, USAID and European Commission funding for these projects were withdrawn from Mali.(113, 114)

The Government of Mali has participated in programs to reduce the worst forms of child labor and strengthen the education system. Following the international intervention in Mali, the Government, in collaboration with UNICEF and NGOs, took minimal actions to provide psychosocial care and reunification services to child soldiers on an ad hoc basis. However, the Government has not implemented programs to assist children engaged in agriculture, domestic service, and begging. Due to violent extremist occupation in the north, the Government is unable to provide services to children residing in the occupied territory.

Based on the reporting above, the following actions would advance the elimination of the worst forms of child labor in Mali:

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Laws and Regulations	Amend the decree that permits certain hazardous activities for children ages 16 and 17 to require that employers provide proof that required vocational training has been provided prior to the commencement of such work.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Adopt laws to ensure protections for all children working outside the formal sector, particularly in domestic service and agricultural work.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Harmonize the Child Protection Code and Penal Code to remove gaps that leave children vulnerable to the worst forms of child labor, including by ensuring that the use, procurement, or offering of a child for prostitution is prohibited for both girls and boys.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
	Criminalize and provide appropriate penalties for child slavery and forced labor, the commercial sexual exploitation of children, the recruitment and use of children ages 15 to 18 as child soldiers, and for the use of children in illicit activities.	2009, 2010, 2011, 2012
Coordination and Enforcement	Streamline coordination across agencies, including by ensuring coordination between the National Unit to Fight Against Child Labor and other overlapping agencies.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Ensure the Morals Brigade has adequate reach, that local police receive adequate training on child protection and the worst forms of child labor, and that the Morals Brigade and local police coordinate on the cases of minors with the intention of providing services in the best interest of the child.	2011, 2012
	Create a mechanism to provide enforcement protection for children working in the informal sector.	2011, 2012

Area	Suggested Actions	Year(s) Action Recommended
Coordination and Enforcement	Collect and make public information on the number of labor inspections and penalties assessed, as well as criminal investigations, prosecutions, and convictions related to the worst forms of child labor.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Create a formalized mechanism to rescue and reintegrate children involved in armed militias and to ensure the Malian army does not support children serving in pro-government militias or integrate children serving in pro-government militias into the Malian army.	2012
	Ensure labor inspectors have adequate staff, time, and resources to conduct inspections.	2012
	Enforce laws relating to child soldiers and slavery, including hereditary slavery and forced labor.	2012
Policies	Take measures to ensure children's safety in schools and to ensure all children have access to education, no matter their ethnicity or gender.	2010, 2011, 2012
	Take measures to implement the National Plan to Combat Child Labor (2011-2020).	2012
Social Programs	Expand and improve programs to prevent children's involvement in exploitative child labor, including by developing and implementing effective model programs to withdraw children from the worst forms of child labor in <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Agriculture, domestic service, forced begging, and mining. • Disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of child soldiers. 	2009, 2010, 2011 2012 2012
	Formalize Mali's system for transferring detained victims of trafficking to NGOs.	2010, 2011

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